

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 CU-02 BIB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OIC-02 OMB-01 ACDA-05

SAJ-01 TRSE-00 /079 W

----- 082510

R 081733Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5630

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 0377

GENEVA FOR CSCE DEL

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFORN

SUBJECT: GISCARD'S COMMENTS OF BASKET III

REF: (A) PARIS 30750; (B) STATE 279841; (C) PARIS 31199

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: DISCUSSION WITH CSCE DELGATION HEAD ANDREANI SUGGESTS THAT "POSITIVE" BASKET III DEVELOPMENTS REFERRED TO BY GISCARD IN HIS DECEMBER 20 INTERVIEW DO NOT REFER TO NEW BILATERAL FRENCH-SOVIET CSCE DEVELOPMENTS BUT TO SAME FEW BASKET III ITEMS ON WHICH U.S. DEL HAS ALSO REPORTED A LIMITED DEGREE OF PROGRESS. GISCARD WAS PROBABLY ACCENTUATING THE POSITIVE FOR PRE-CHRISTMAS CONSUMPTION, ALTHOUGH GOF DOES SEE IMPROVEMENTS IN RECENT SOVIET CSCE TONE AND BELIEVES LATE SPRING CONCLUSION OF PHASE 2 IS POSSIBLE IN PRINCIPLE. END SUMMARY.

2. POLCOUNSELOR'S MEETING JANUARY 6 WITH QUAI CSCE DELEGATION HEAD ANDREANI MADE CLEAR THAT THE "NEW PROPOSITIONS CONCERNING BASKET III" (REFTELS B AND C),
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WHICH GISCARD REFERRED TO AS "POSITIVE" IN HIS DECEMBER

20 PRESS CONFERENCE, ARE IN FACT ROUGHLY IDENTICAL WITH ISSUES ON WHICH OUR DELEGATION IN GENEVA HAS ALSO REPORTED A DEGREE OF PROGRESS (SEE FOR INSTANCE, PARA 1, GENEVA 7600). THUS, ANDREANI POINTED OUT THAT SOVIETS HAVE GENERALLY BEEN MORE "REALISTIC" IN THEIR APPROACH TO CSCE SINCE THE MIDDLE OF NOVEMBER, AS REFLECTED IN THEIR INITIATIVE WITH RESPECT TO PRINCIPLES OF HUMAN CONTACT. MORE IMPORTANTLY, QUAI INTERPRETS INFORMAL AGREEMENTS RECENTLY REACHED ON ISSUES SUCH AS MARRIAGE BETWEEN DIFFERENT NATIONALS, RE-UNION OF DIVIDED FAMILIES AND TEMPORARY FAMILY VISITS, AS SIGNS OF CONCRETE PROGRESS. AS A RESULT ANDREANI THOUGHT THAT PREVIOUS SOVIET VERBAL INSISTENCE ON EARLY CONCLUSION OF CSCE HAD NOW BEEN REPLACED BY A DEGREE OF ACTION ON THEIR PART, SUGGESTING THAT THEY DO, INDEED, WANT TO CONCLUDE PHASE 2 AT AN EARLY DATE.

3. ANDREANI READILY ADMITTED THAT THE SOVIETS CONTINUE TO BE MUCH LESS HELPFUL ON OTHER EQUALLY IMPORTANT QUESTIONS. THUS THE SOVIETS HAVE REMAINED ADAMANT IN REFUSING FRENCH DEMANDS TO DISCUSS ESTABLISHMENT OF A READING ROOM IN MOSCOW, AND, NO SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE SO FAR ON OTHER CRITICAL BASKET III QUESTIONS, SUCH AS IMPROVING THE WORKING CONDITIONS OF JOURNALISTS IN THE USSR. HOWEVER, HE THOUGHT THAT IT SHOULD BE FAIRLY EASY FOR THE SOVIETS TO MAKE CONCESSIONS IN THIS LAST-NAMED FIELD. AND HE STRONGLY IMPLIED THAT THE FRENCH WOULD, IN THE END, ALSO MAKE CONCESSIONS, FOR INSTANCE, BY ACCEPTING AN AGREEMENT SUPPORTING THE "DESIRABILITY" OF READING ROOMS IN PRINCIPLE, EVEN IF THE TEXT FELL SHORT OF ACTUAL COMMITMENT TO DO SO.

4. EVEN SO, CURRENT FRENCH ASSESSMENT OF CSCE PROSPECTS IS STILL CAUTIOUS. BESIDES BASKET III ISSUES, MAJOR HURDLES REMAIN TO BE OVERCOME, SUCH AS THE QUESTION OF THE EQUAL VALUE OF PRINCIPLES, ON WHICH NO CLEAR PATTERN OF TRADE-OFFS SEEMS AS YET IN SIGHT. MOREOVER, THERE IS NOW THE FUNDAMENTAL NEW QUESTION OF BREZHNEV'S HEALTH WHICH MAY WELL AFFECT THE ENTIRE SITUATION. BUT, CONFIDENTIAL

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BARRING SUCH FUNDAMENTAL CHANGES, ANDREANI THOUGHT THAT AN EARLY CONCLUSION OF PHASE 2, PERHAPS BY LATE SPRING, WAS NOT AN UNREASONABLE EXPECTATION.

5. AS FOR GISCARD'S QUITE OPTIMISTIC PUBLIC COMMENTS OF DECEMBER 20, ANDREANI THOUGHT THAT THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN BASKET III DISCUSSION IN GENEVA WERE UNDOUBTEDLY VIEWED BY HIM, FROM HIS "HIGH PERSPECTIVE",

AS SIGNIFICANT RESULTS OF HIS BREZHNEV TALKS, WHICH HE WANTED TO UNDERSCORE IN HIS PRE-CHRISTMAS INTERVIEW. HOWEVER, ANDREANI EMPHASIZED THAT GISCARD HAS ALWAYS BEEN VERY SOBER ABOUT THE POSSIBILITIES OF BASKET III, AND THAT HIS DECEMBER 20 STATEMENT SHOULD THEREFORE NOT BE TAKEN OUT OF CONTEXT.

6. COMMENT: WE ARE LEFT WITH IMPRESSION THAT GISCARD'S DISCOVERY OF "POSITIVE" DEVELOPMENTS IN BASKET III, IN AREAS WHERE WE SEE ONLY VERY MODEST PROGRESS, PARTLY REFLECTS HIS SELF-INTEREST IN EMPHASIZING THE RESULTS OF HIS BREZHNEV MEETING IN A PRE-CHRISTMAS INTERVIEW AIMED TO EXTENT AT THE FRENCH LEFT. LEAVING NUANCES OF EMPHASIS ASIDE, IT ALSO SUGGESTS CONTINUATION OF THE GENERAL CHANGE OF FRENCH ATTITUDE TOWARD CSCE WHICH HAS TAKEN PLACE IN THE LAST SIX MONTHS, TOWARD A LESS CRITICAL AND MORE POSITIVE POSTURE SOMEWHAT MORE IN LINE WITH OUR OWN.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PERSONAL OPINION, BASKET III, PRESS CONFERENCES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 08 JAN 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975PARIS00377
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750006-0718
From: PARIS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750169/aaaaciuj.tel
Line Count: 134
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 PARIS 30750, 75 STATE 279841, 75 PARIS 31199
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 13 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <13 MAY 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <14 MAY 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GISCARD'S COMMENTS OF BASKET III
TAGS: PFOR, FR, CSCE, (GISCARD D'ESTAING, VALERY)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006